

PRESS RELEASE
5 October 1989

ALGERIA: ONE YEAR ON

A year ago today the Algerian masses in an explosion of anger against the undemocratic and repressive regime rose in spontaneous protest and defied the government. Their demonstration was a manifestation of the smouldering discontent not only over prolonged scarcity of the basic necessities of life generated by deliberate government policy of shortages for the purposes of raising prices, but more because of the regime's denial of their political rights and neglect of their Islamic aspirations. In the days that followed thousands of indiscriminate arrests were made, and hundreds fell victim to the onslaught of the security forces. The Islamic Council takes this opportunity of the first anniversary of these events to salute the memory of those martyrs who fell in defence of their Islamic ideals and fundamental rights.

In a recent interview given to Sharq al Awsat, Ben Jedid said that Ahmad Ben Bella, the first elected President of Algeria and the great hero of the Algerian Revolution, had committed crimes against Algeria for which he should be punished. The Islamic Council questions who has committed crimes? The man who fought against the crimes of the colonial power, who led the revolution and saw it through to success and independence? Or the man who has sent tanks to crush his own people, resulting in the deaths of hundreds, and the brutal repression of thousands more?

The year that has passed since the popular protest has seen the strengthening of the resolve of the Algerian people to safeguard their Islamic identity and to achieve their goals. On this anniversary, the Islamic Council is confident that the brave people of Algeria will continue their march and will realise their aspirations.